

**MINUTES**  
**LEGISLATIVE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**June 20 & 21, 2005**

The Legislative Government Oversight Committee met June 20, 2005, in the Legislative Dining Room at the Capitol. Co-Chairperson, Representative Alons, called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Other members present were:

Senator Tom Courtney, Co-chair  
Senator Michael Connolly  
Senator Ron Wieck

Representative Joe Hutter, V.C.  
Representative Vicki Lensing, RM  
Representative Clel Baudler  
Representative George Eichhorn  
Representative Cindy Winckler

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Representative Hutter made a motion to accept and approve the April 19, 2005, minutes. No changes noted.

**STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE**

Mr. David Vaudt and Mr. Warren Jenkins, State Auditor's Office, discussed the calculation and performance of state agency and local government audits. Mr. Vaudt stated that the performance of cost-effective audits is a focus for the office, summarized variables impacting auditing costs and expenses, and indicated that productivity performance goals have been introduced for office staff and that technology upgrades have been regularly made. Mr. Jenkins reviewed local and state agency audit costs in recent fiscal years, mentioned that audit costs are estimated in advance of the year of performance, and stated that actual audit costs have been less than estimates since FY2001. Committee discussion included concerns over increasing audit costs for agencies with decreased budgets, differing audit rates for state versus local government audits, and the merits of applying a request for proposals process for state agency audits. In a related presentation, Ms. Mollie Anderson, Department of Administrative Services, described the operation of Customer Councils established to provide input by various business enterprise customers regarding utility service levels, service options, investment proposals, and rates.

**CHILD SUPPORT RECOVERY UNIT**

Ms. Jeanne Nesbit and Ms. Carol Eaton, Child Support Recovery Unit, Department of Human Services, provided an overview of the functions of the unit, customer profiles, improvements in collection rates, and a comparison of those rates to collection efforts in other states. It was noted that approximately sixty-two percent of court-ordered child support payments are being paid, and that the majority of non-paying cases involve self-employed or cash-basis employees, or situations where parents reside in different states. Charts depicting total child support collections, net child support cases, and the rate of growth in cases over the past several fiscal years were distributed, with the comment that collection rates have been significantly increased. It was also noted that Iowa ranks sixth nationally in current collections rates, and that the state has a relatively high percent of cases with court-ordered child support. Mr. Stu Vos and Mr.

Wayne Cooper, Iowa Department of Revenue, provided information relating to the operation of the department's central collections unit, with an emphasis on partnering efforts with the unit which maximize both entities' strengths with regard to collection efforts. Potential legislation which would enhance the ability to collect from self-employed and cash-basis employees was mentioned.

## **BOARD OF REGENTS**

Three presentations relating to the Board of Regents were made:

***Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School.*** Ms. Mary Ellen Becker, Board of Regents, distributed a handout detailing recommendations resulting from the formation of a Task Force to examine future needs and solutions for students who are blind or visually impaired. Recommendations included, but were not limited to, the establishment of a Coordinating Council by the Board and the State Board of Education to review all services which support the education of students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities; ensuring that access to services is equitably available regardless of a student's residence; and initiation of discussions with the University of Northern Iowa regarding development of a rigorous academic program for students with visual impairments. Ms. Becker stated that the location of service delivery will be driven by a determination of how best to deliver the highest quality of service, and that a decision on program location had not yet been reached.

***University of Iowa Outreach Clinics.*** Dr. David Johnsen, College of Dentistry, University of Iowa, discussed the opening of outreach clinics in Muscatine and Coralville, Iowa, involving pediatric training for the college's students, and community-based outreach, respectively. Dr. Johnsen addressed the concern that the operation of the clinics might prove detrimental to existing private dental practitioner practices in the areas. He indicated that there appeared little potential for a direct negative impact, given the student-training focus and targeted patient populations of the programs. The committee requested additional information regarding program funding.

***Municipal Building Code Adherence for Regents Construction.*** Several individuals affiliated with Regents institutions design and construction services were present regarding the issue of whether municipal building codes are applicable to construction projects undertaken by the institutions. It was indicated that municipal building codes do not directly apply to such projects, but that contractors involved in the projects are licensed by some municipality within the state. Legislative efforts in recent years to enact a statewide system of licensure for electricians and plumbers were discussed with the comment that it appears consensus among various interested groups for such a system is building. Representatives from the State Fire Marshall's Office were also present to discuss the status of fire safety deficiency reports and inspection schedules for Regents facilities, indicating that they are working closely with the Regents institutions to ensure that safety standards are met and deficiencies are remedied.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Representative Alons adjourned the meeting at 3:47 p.m.

**June 21, 2005**

Rep. Alons called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

### **IOWA GRANTS ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GEMS) UPDATE**

Ms. Kathy Mabie, GEMS, updated committee members regarding fiscal and program-related system results. Ms. Mabie indicated that GEMS-initiated indirect cost reimbursement increases resulted in \$920,000 in total new revenue to the general fund in fiscal years 2003-2005, and will result in \$300,000 annually beginning in fiscal year 2006. The system is self-supporting, with \$2.5 million in grants awarded to date and \$450,000 in a pending status. Ms. Mabie discussed training efforts and the administration of web site surveys, indicated that current projects include a paperless grant application process and database upgrades and expansions to include local government entities, and provided information regarding an upcoming Iowa Grant Symposium exploring non-governmental funding sources for government-affiliated entities.

### **IOWA STATE AMBER ALERT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION.**

Captain Todd Misel, Department of Public Safety, accompanied by members of the Amber Alert Coordinating Committee, provided an overview of the history, testing, implementation, and operation of the State's Amber Alert program. Captain Misel tracked through the process for evaluating whether qualification criteria for Amber Alert status has been met, the procedure for dissemination of Amber Alert information to a variety of media outlets, and summarized Amber Alert cases in the state since the program's inception here in 2003. Committee discussion focused on the Amber Alert implementation timeline relating to the Jetseta Gage case in Cedar Rapids in March, 2005, and perceived delays in notification of Amber Alert status after her disappearance was initially reported. Captain Misel indicated that he felt the implementation effort was generally good, given some uncertainty regarding the relationship between the abductor and the victim's family. A delay in activation of highway warning signs in the Cedar Rapids area and relatively short duration of warning sign display once activation was achieved were acknowledged. Mr. Sandra Larson, Iowa Department of Transportation, stated that it has now been determined that messages will remain posted for a twenty-four hour period, unless an alert is canceled or an emergency weather message generates a temporary preemption.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

***E911 Update Report*** – Ms. Jennifer Acton, Fiscal Division, Legislative Services Agency, provided the committee with a summary of a quarterly report received by the office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division regarding wireless surcharge revenues and expenditures, and implementation of phases 1 and 2 of the wireless E911 communications system.

***Report to the Legislative Council*** – Committee members reviewed and approved submission of a report to the Legislative Council regarding committee activities during the 2005 legislative session, and anticipated discussion topics during the 2005 interim.

***Topics for Future Meetings*** – Topics for the July Meeting were selected, and a procedure whereby proposed agenda items would be screened through an initial written inquiry from the committee to the agency or entity involved was proposed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Representative Lensing moved the meeting adjourn at 11:42 a.m.

### Subcommittee on HSB 302

House members Representative George Eichhorn, Representative Dwayne Alons and Representative Vicki Lensing (sitting in for Representative Roger Thomas) met along with other interested parties to initiate discussion on House Study Bill 302, (Starvation and Dehydration of Persons with Disabilities Prevention Act) that and provides remedies, also known as "Teri's Law". Representative George Eichhorn, Subcommittee Chairman, gave a brief overview of the bill sponsored by the Government Oversight Committee and assigned to the Subcommittee on April 20, 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the various interest groups and to allow interested persons to provide their comments about the bill. Keith Luchtel, representing the Iowa Medical Society; Dr. Steve Wolf, a family physician; Slyvia Piper, representing Iowa Protection and Advocacy Services; and Ken Watkins, representing Iowa Health Care Systems. All spoke and expressed their interests and concerns about the bill. Chairperson Eichhorn noted that discussions will continue on this bill throughout the interim, starting with the July meeting.